

city of santa barbara Water Conservation Program

Lawn Alternatives

Keep that green lawn feel without the high water bills.

There are many lawn alternative plants that are sustainable and water-wise, reducing the amount of labor, chemicals and water required by a lawn.

native grasses

Native Grasses

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden includes two native grass species in their "lawn" at the Home Demonstration Garden. Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) both create an attractive, water wise meadow. Visit the Home Demonstration garden to learn about the beauty of native plants in the landscape.

yarrow lawn

Yarrow Lawn

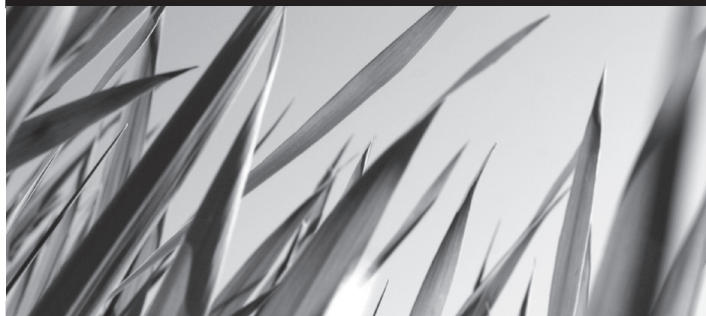
Yarrow is an excellent alternative to traditional turf. It thrives on minimal irrigation, and only requires mowing every other month. There are many varieties of yarrow, "Rosy Red" (*Achillea millefolium*) and "White" (*A. millefolium*), have feathery, deep green foliage and attractive flowers. Flowering can be enhanced by increasing the mowing interval.

sedges

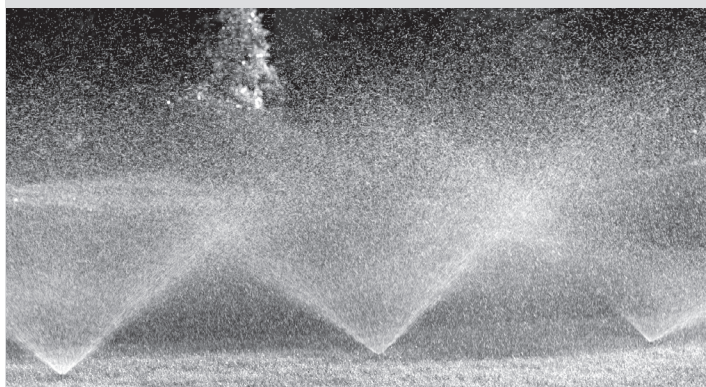
Sedges

Sedges are grass-like plants that are very fresh looking, traffic tolerant and easy to grow. They use about half the water of a conventional lawn. They can be mowed regularly, occasionally or not at all, as you prefer. Try California Meadow Sedge (*Carex pansa*) for a bright green look, or Blue Sedge (*Carex glauca*) for a lovely blue-green color. Sedges can be invasive, so it may be wise to contain it with a root barrier.

Lawn Care Tips



- Reduce the size of your lawn to meet your needs for recreation.
- Water smart. Figure out how much water your lawn actually needs by using the watering calculator and the watering index at sbwater.org.
- Avoid watering when it's windy, or in the middle of the day when evaporation is high.
- Check your sprinkler system regularly. Many lawns are irrigated at night, so mis-aligned or broken sprinkler heads go undetected.
- Soils make a difference. For sandy soils, short, more frequent watering periods are best. For heavier clay soils, it's best to water deeply and less frequently.



Water Conservation Hotline (805) 564-5460 or www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/water